

A SKETCH OF CHARLES T. WALKER

by

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Charles T. Walker, D. D.

PASTOR OF TABERNACLE BAPTIST CHURCH,
AUGUSTA, GA.



— BY —

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EDITOR OF THE WEEKLY SENTINEL.



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Charles Thomas Walker was born on the 11th day of January 1858, at Hephzibah, Ga. Hephzibah is in Richmond county about 14 miles south-west of Augusta. He is the youngest of 11 children of whom 6 are dead and 5 are living. His father, Thomas Walker, was buried the day before he was born. His mother, Mrs. Hannah Walker, died in 1866, little Charley being, at the time, only 8 years old.

Thus, even before Charles was born, his mother was draped in the weeds of widowhood, and he first opened his eyes on the light of this world as a fatherless child. Thus, also, in early childhood, even before he had any realizing sense of his true condition, he was compelled by the stern, but beneficent discipline of an Alwise Providence to wail forth the cry of complete orphanage.

On Wednesday before the first Sunday in June, 1873, while young Walker was hoeing cotton, he decided to seek the Lord. He left the field that day and went into the woods, and remained in the woods from Wednesday afternoon without eating, drinking or seeing an one, until the following Saturday afternoon when he was converted. He was baptised on the first Sunday in July by his uncle, the Rev Nathan Walker, then pastor of the Franklin Covenant Church, a faithful servant of the Master, who still lives, shedding light and love among the people.

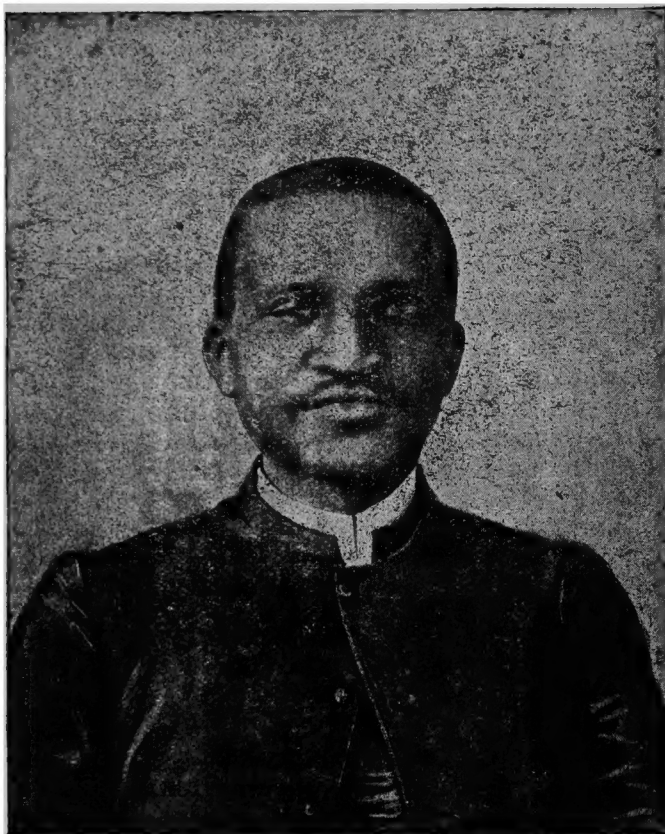
Young Walker immediately became an active and zealous christian, and was impressed with the thought that he was called of God to preach the gospel. Accordingly in 1874, he entered the Augusta Institute, a theological school located at Augusta and presided over by the late Joseph T. Robert, D. D., L. L. D. This school has since been moved to Atlanta and is now the Atlanta Baptist Seminary. In school, Mr. Walker was soon celebrated for his great ability, for his thoroughness of scholarship, and for his exemplary deportment. He had only 6 dollars when he entered school. The first term he did his own cooking; he cooked only twice a week—on Wednesdays and Saturdays; so great was his desire for knowledge that he felt that he could not spare the time to cook every day. When he had spent his six dollars he picked up his little bundle and was on the eve of leaving school. Some of his student friends finding out the reasons of his proposed departure and realizing what a loss it would be to them and to the cause, demonstrated with him and

urged him to be patient a day or so longer. One of his fellow students, the Rev, Dr, Love, of Savannah, Ga., went so far as to promise him that he would provide for him personally until arrangements could be made. Mr. Walker consented to remain; meanwhile Dr. Robert had been informed and he, in turn succeeded in interesting three gentlemen of Dayton Ohio, in young Walker and through the kindness of these gentlemen, the motherless and fatherless boy was enabled to prosecute his studies for 5 years at the Augusta Institute.

In 1876, in the 18th year of his age, Mr Walker was licensed to preach, and on the first Sunday in May, 1877, he was ordained to the sacred office of the gospel ministry. He soon became noted as a preacher, possessing, as he did supreme eloquence and a fair knowledge of the scriptures. In 1878 he was elected pastor of the Franklin Covenant Baptist church, of which he was a member and by the time he was 21 years old he was pastor of four country churches and one city church; viz: Franklin Covenant Baptist church, Hephzibah, Thankful Baptist Church, Waynesboro, McKinnie's Branch Baptist Church, Burke county, Ebenezer Baptist church Richmond county and Mount Olive Baptist church Augusta, Ga. In 1880, he pastored the First Baptist church in LaGrange. In 1882, he was called to the pastorate of Central Baptist church Augusta, Ga. and the following year resigned and organized the Tabernacle Baptist church, of which he is still the honored and distinguished pastor.

Rev. Walker built the Tabernacle church in 1885 at a cost of \$13,500. It is a handsome brick structure, and was dedicated in three months from the day it was commenced. In the begining its membership was 200. At present the membership is 900, and Rev. Walker knows them every one by name. Recently a new pipe organ has been put in the edifice at a cost of \$1,500. The building has already proved too small to accommodate the great crowd that go to hear this great man preacher, and efforts are being made to remodel the house of worship and make it much larger.

Among the office of trust and responsibility which Rev Mr Walker has held are the following: Moderator of the Western Union Baptist Association, President of the Executive Board of the missionary Baptist Convention of Georgia, Secretary of the State Baptist Sunday School convetion for 8 years. Members of the Board of trustees of



Rev. C. T. Walker, D. D.

Pastor of Tabernacle Baptist Church, Augusta, Ga., and
Treasurer of the National Baptist Convention of the
United States

the Walker Baptist College and treasurer of the American National Baptist Convention, and Business Manager of THE WEEKLY SENTINEL.

The honorary degree of "Doctor of Divinity" was conferred upon him in 1890 by the State University of Kentucky.

During the summer of 1891, Dr. Walker in company with the Rev. E. R. Carter of Atlanta, Ga. took an extensive trip through Europe and the Holy land and besides staying for awhile in England and on the Continent and in Asia, he took a peep over in to Africa. On his return he lectured throughout the South and in Boston and New York and every where with profit and success. Many of the leading newspapers throughout country spoke in terms of praise and admiration of the wonderful preacher and lecturer.

The Rev Dr Walker is only 34 years old—quite young indeed to have accomplished so much for the advancement of Christ's Kingdom

When Rev. Mr. Walker was leaving Hephzibah, in 1880, for La-Grange, one of his white friends, Col A. C. Walker, gave him a letter of recommendation which speaks for itself. Here is what the letter said:

"The bearer, Rev. C. T. Walker, is the fourth in descent from a family of Negroes brought from Virginia to Burke county by my grand father in 1773. As slaves they were noted for their admirable qualities and as freemen have sustained their reputation.

Charles, by his energy, has obtained an excellent education and for two years has been licensed teacher of one our public schools. His character is irreproachable in all respects and by none is he esteemed more than by the more intelligent white citizens among whom he lives. It gives me great pleasure to testify to his worth and I most respectfully ask for him the generous consideration of the new people, with whom he is about to cast his lot. We sincerely regret his departure from among us, as he was exercising a most happy influence with his own race here"

Rev. Walker came to Augusta in 1883. In 1885, upon the completion of Tabernacle church, and on the day of its dedication all the papers of Augusta spoke in highest praise of the work accomplished and invariably referred to the edifice as an everlasting monument to the perseverance and energy of the pastor, Rev C. T. Walker.

Rev. Walker spent the fall of 1886 in the North, soliciting funds to complete the payment of his church property. His church had by their own efforts paid \$10,000 of the \$12,000, which the lot and edifice cost. He carried many letters of recommendation from leading men of the South.

Dr. Love, of Savannah, pastor of the largest Baptist church in the world, wrote: "Rev. Charles T. Walker is one of the leading men of Georgia and is alright."

Prof Wm. E Holmes of the Atlanta Baptist Seminary, wrote: "I cheerfully recommend Rev Mr Walker and his cause to the public"

and bespeak for him the success which he richly deserves."

Hen Patrick Walsh, editor of the *Augusta Chronicle* wrote: "Rev. Walker is doing a great good among his people. His church is a great credit and both he and his people are worthy of substantial aid."

Hon R. H. May, then Mayor of the city of Augusta, wrote: "He is perfect gentleman, devout christian and deserving of all confidence."

The testimonials Rev. Walker carried with him on this trip might be multiplied ad infinitum.

In New York Rev. Justin Dewey Fulton wrote: "My people who heard him pronounce him a preacher of more than ordinary ability. His voice is good, his learning modest and impressive, his language excellent, and the aim of his preaching is to glorify Christ."

In Boston, Rev. J. Horatio Carter, D. D., wrote:

"Brother Walker is an able, earnest, logical and eloquent preacher, and worthy of support."

Rev. Walker was present at the organization of the American National Baptist Convention in 1886 at St. Louis, Mo., and served on the committee of constitution, and otherwise played a most prominent part in its organization. He has attended every session every year since, and is one of the most prominent members at its annual sessions.

In 1889, at Indianapolis, Ind., before this body, the Rev. Mr. Walker preached the National sermon and that with telling effect. At its conclusion, the Rev. William J. Simmons, D. D., L. L. D., Pres. of the State University of Ky., walked up to the minister, shook his hand and said, "You have won your D. D., and I'll see that you get it." The following summer, at the close of the school year 89-90, Dr. Simmons, true to his words had the trustees of the State University of Kentucky to confer upon Rev. C. T. Walker, the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity which he has worthily borne ever since.

Writing up this session of National Baptists the Rev. Dr. Daniel A. Gaddie, took occasion to say the Rev. Mr. Walker was "a young man full of life and piety, beautiful and attractive in delivery. He is an electrifying orator and waxes warm in the end. He is a great revivalist, a finished and pointed workman."

In this same convention Rev. Walker won for himself a national reputation for his wise and conservative stand when the body had under consideration the outlavery, lynch law and other outrages of the South. He was referred to, by the leading newspapers of the country, as a strong man in a crisis. The other members of the body, almost to a man, indulged in wholesale abuse of the South; maligned its name, hit the white people of the South some death dealing blows; excitement ran high. Rev. Walker gained the floor and made an able speech counseling wisdom and moderation and stating that he believed that the best element of the white people in the North were trying, to create a public sentiment so powerful against these outrages that they will become impossible.

On 21st. of May 1882, Rev. Walker delivered the annual address before the Atlanta Baptist and Spelman Seminary on the Needs and Responsibilities of the Colored Race. It was a masterly effort. In opening the speaker said:

"When our mind like the swiftly passing scene of a panorama take a retrospective view of the past history of

our race, and when we remember that for over two centuries, ignorance, the mother of bigotry and superstition, the bane of society, the prolific mother of weakness, held our people with its slavish chains, we must admit that many of our people have made commendable progress, and that the influence of religion, morality and intelligence is increasingly felt."

The speaker dwelt at length upon the Needs, and then took up the Responsibilities, Said he:

"We are responsible for our souls. The soul is immortal, and cannot like the body, undergo decomposition. It will live forever. When the mountains are melted in the general conflagration, when the pyramids of Egypt are levelled to the ground, when the refulgent stars, the silent messengers, shall cease to dance in their golden sockets; when the moon, the queen of night, refuses to give her silvery brightness; when the sun, the king of day, the centre of the solar system, shall be blown out; when earth is shrouded in her regalia of mourning, and when ocean shall gather all her waters together to chant her funeral songs, the soul will be living somewhere in God's distant universe."

In 1884, Rev. Walker delivered the annual address on the first day of January in Augusta. His subject was "A REVIEW OF THE PAST" It was a wonderful exposition of the progress of the Negro in America. In the course of his remarks, he paid the following tribute to Abraham Lincoln;

"Probably no man since the days of Washington was ever so deeply and firmly imbedded and enshrined in the hearts of the people as Abraham Lincoln. He won for himself a place in the hearts of our people that time can never efface. By his noble deeds, emanated from his kind heart, he wrote his name on the page of future time as legible as the stars on the brow of evening."

In his address at the laying of the corner stone of the new building of the Atlanta Baptist Seminary, in 1889, Rev. Walker said among other things:

"If all men would recognize the fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, pledge implicit obedience to the divine law and practice the scriptural code of ethics, there would be no race problem. The race problem is born of wickedness, inflamed by modern fanatics, stimulated and encouraged by speculative, unworthy politicians. The Ne-

gro is a loyal, peaceable, law-abiding citizen; among them you will find no anarchist, nihilist, liberalist, communist or strikers; the Negro has always been found on the side of the constitution of his State and the Union; he isn't asking for supremacy or social equality; he only desires an equal advantage in the race of life; he asks that you do not throw impediments in his way; don't close the gates of prosperity against him because of his color; don't hate him because he was a slave, he was not so by choice; don't despise him because of his ignorance, it is not his fault; don't ignore him on account of his poverty, he has had no rich ancestors to bequeath him landed estates. He is unfortunate, pity him; he is struggling, help him. A bright day is dawning. Citizens of every rank and section of this country are uniting hand in hand to advocate such legislation as will remove illiteracy. The last legislature of Georgia deserve honorable mention for making appropriation for public education. Our distinguished State School Commissioner, Judge James S Hook, is trying to put Georgia in line with other states intellectually and he is succeeding admirably. Since God has raised up so many friends for us, both at home and abroad, let us cultivate a friendly relation with those among whom we live. Let us have a hand in solving our problem, shaping our destiny and making for ourselves a creditable history"

In the foregoing, we have attempted to give a short-sketch of the career of Dr. Walker, together with a few testimonials from his friends and some extracts from his addresses. The half has not been told. The full history of his life would make a large volume. It ought to be written, and will be some time. Suffice it to say that, as a man, Dr. Walker is modest to a fault, generous in the extreme, patient, forbearing and unselfish; as a minister, he possesses great fervor and eloquence, and as a pulpit orator probably he is excelled by no man in this country. The common people hear him gladly. His highest aim is to be an humble servant of the Lord Jesus Christ.

